7. The benefits of tourisms to be shared with local communities using the recommendations of the Task Force.

Project of Cloning Cheeta

2087. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the project of cloning Cheeta in India has suffered a setback following the refusal of Iran to give India two Cheeta as requested; and

(b) if so, what alternate options are being explored to re-introduce the extinct Cheeta in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Ministry of Environment & Forests has not initiated the project of cloning of Cheetah, nor has made any request to Iran for giving two Cheetahs for the project. And therefore the question of refusal of Iran to give India two Cheetahs does not arise.

A proposal to resurrect the Indian Cheetah by cloning has been prepared by the Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology, (CCMB), Hyderabad. The Ministry of Environment & Forests had however suggested taking up a study of the present habitat of the Asiatic Cheetah in Iran. Accordingly, a Committee was constituted, comprising of experts from CCMB, Wildlife Institute of India and Ahmedabad Zoo and Central Zoo Authority for visiting Iran and initiating a dialogue with the Iranian counter parts for conservation of the species in that country. The Ministry of External Affairs was requested to facilitate the visit of the Indian team to Iran.

The Ministry of External Affairs has received a communication from its Iranian counter part which states as "Research in this regard shows due to the fact that the Asian wildcat is an endangered species in Iran and that basic research has not been completed regarding the wildcat and to help safeguard the living habitat of the species any action that may distrub the habitat is forbidden. Therefore, this organisation does not agree to such cooperation at the moment and suggests that due to

the close genetic similarity between the Asian and African wildcat, the Indian scientists may use the African wildcat in their studies."

(b) Does not arise.

Forest Land for Development Project of Sabarimala

2088. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for forest land for development project of Sabarimala situated in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala has been received by Government;

(b) if so, the details of land sought and the decision taken on the above proposal, as on today;

(c) whether there is any proposal submitted by the competent authority for sanction/clearance of a detailed road development project for Sabarimala; and

(d) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) A proposal for diversion of 12.675 hectares of forest land in Periyar Tiger Reserve for providing facilities to Sabarimala pilgrims has been received from the State Government of Kerala. The proposal has been recommended by the Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife. As the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has imposed restriction on use of forest land in National Parks and Sanctuaries, the user agency is required to obtain case-specific permission from the Hon'ble Court.

(c) and (d) Two other proposals for diversion of forest land for development of Nilakkal Base Camp for Sabarimala pilgrims were also received from the State Government of Kerala. In-principle approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in respect of these proposals has also been granted by the Central Government subject to fulfilment of certain conditions. On the basis of part compliance of the conditions by the State Government, final approval for diversion of 60.14 hectares of forest land was granted in June, 2005 which includes 5.2 hectares for widening and upgradation of the existing road network and 2.42 hectares for additional road construction.